DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 078 034 TM 002 849

AUTHOR	Conway, Lee
TITLE	The Elementary Education of Black and Chicano Children: An Iatrogenic Dilemma. Final Report.
SPONS AGENCY	National Inst. of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
BUREAU NO	BR-2-I-020
PUB DATE	Feb 73
CONTRACT	OEC-9-72-0030
NOTE	35p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	Academic Ability; *Achievement Tests; Evaluation Methods; Grade 5; *Mexican Americans; *Negro Students; *Response Style (Tests); Self Concept; Standardized Tests; Student Evaluation; Student Teacher Relationship; Technical Reports; *Test Bias; Testing; Test Results

ABSTRACT

Evaluations of compensatory educational programs reveal that Black and Chicano school children do relatively less well the longer they remain in school. This investigation sought to determine the extent to which this regression is attributable to contemporary evaluation methodology. Analysis was conducted of the impact of standardized achievement tests on a population of low SES Black and Chicano fifth grade students. It was hypothesized that the effect of frequent testing would be that of depressing achievement test scores. Analysis determined that the typical student dropped an average of two stanines in reading achievement as a result of this testing. Additionally, this study found that: (1) Black and Chicano children learn more than standardized tests show; (2) Testing is a high stress activity; and (3) Testing seriously impairs the teacher-student relationship. Research was conducted through structured classroom observations and interviews and interval analysis of test scores. It is concluded that standardized testing produces primary and secondary reactive effects which are destructive to self-confidence, achievement, and the academic ability of minority, low-income children. (Author/CK)

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Project No. 2-I-020

Grant No. OEC-9-72-0030

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Berkeley, California

THE ELEMENTARY EDUCATION OF BLACK AND CHICANO CHILDREN: AN IATROGENIC DILEMMA

February 1973

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
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Author's Abstract

Almost without exception, evaluations of compensatory educational programs reveal that Black and Chicano school children do relatively less well the longer they remain in school. This investigation sought to determine the extent to which this regression is attributable to contemporary evaluation methodology. Analysis was conducted of the impact of obtrusive evaluative research procedures (in the form of standardized achievement tests) on a population of low SES Black and Chicano fifth grade students.

It was hypothesized that the effect of frequent testing would be that of depressing achievement test scores. Analysis determined that the typical student dropped an average of two stanines in reading achievement as a result of this testing. Further, the general decline in measured achievement continued unabated after Spring testing. Factors traditionally associated with higher achievement, such as family income, mother's education, etc., failed to stem this decline in achievement following testing.

Additionally, this study found that: (1) Black and Chicano children learn more than standardized tests show, (2) testing is a high stress activity, subjecting these children to a tremendous ordeal, and (3) testing seriously impairs the teacher-student relationship.

Research was conducted through structured classroom observations and interviews; and interval analysis of test scores.

This study concludes that standardized testing, the major methodological approach of educational evaluation, produces primary and secondary reactive effects which are destructive to the self-confidence, achievement, and ultimately the academic ability of stigmatized, minority, low income children.

Final Report

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The research reported herein was performed pursuant to a grant with the National Institute of Education, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Contractors undertaking such projects under Government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their professional judgment in the conduct of the project. Points of view or opinions stated do not, therefore, necessarily represent official National Institute of Education position or policy.

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INTRODUCTION

It has been a decade since Banesh Hoffman warned against the misuse of tests in our schools.

> Testing is no game. It is in deadly earnest. If tests are misused, the consequences can be far from trifling. Lives can be warped and careers ruined.[1]

Since then the nation's school children, especially the poor, have been engulfed in a tidal wave of testing. A recent review estimates that in 1961 100 million ability tests were administered in educational institutions and that by 1970 the figure had risen to 250 million tests a year. In view of the fact that there were some 45 million elementary and secondary school pupils during this period, this represents three to five standardized tests per pupil per year.[2]

School-age youths are increasingly subjected to internal and external testing programs from childhood onward. At age four the child is administered a pre-school test; at age five, a reading readiness test; and beginning with age six, annual batteries of language arts, math and IQ tests. The lives of serious-minded high school and college students become dominated by quizzes, course tests, qualifying exams, etc. Presently, 48% of the nation's youth enter college; but a mere 25% of those who start ever acquire the A.B. degree. A major obstacle affecting the life chances of today's youth is a test of some sort.

Contributing to this barrage of testing is a newly emerging professional, the educational evaluator, whose task it is to assess the effectiveness of programs designed to improve the academic performance of low-income school children. A single form of instrumentation, the standardized achievement test, founded on the relatively unchallenged assumptions of a narrow speciality, has become the solitary and official methodology of evaluation research in education.

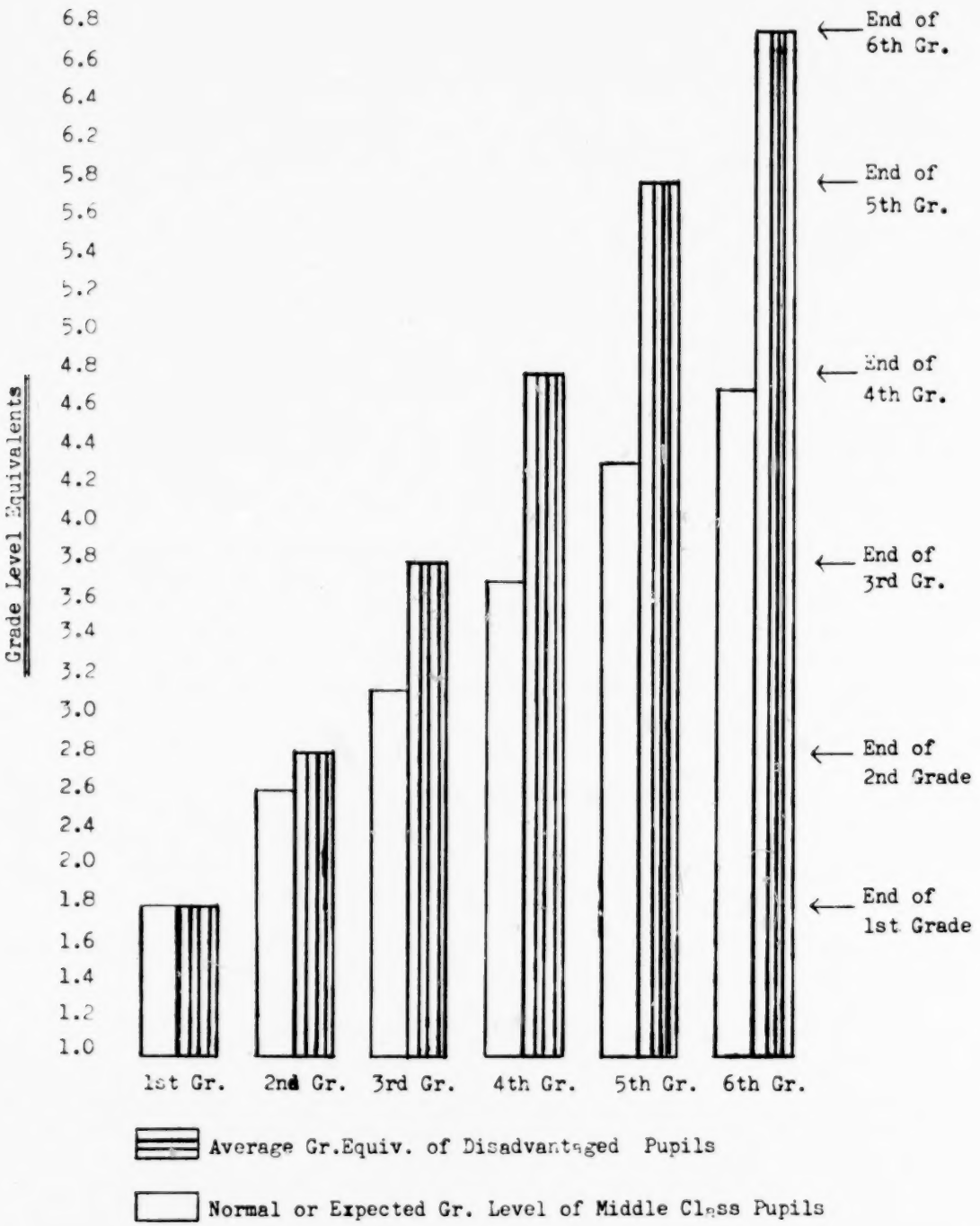
The Mystery of Reading Decline

The singular conclusion derived from achievement test results across the nation is that the longer poor children spend in school, despite the expenditure of tens of millions, the worse their achievement. Reports by educational evaluators invariably illustrate this mysterious decline in the measured achievement of Black and Chicano youths as they progress through the grades.

Granted the imperfections in compensatory educational programs, why should these children appear to grow "dumber" the longer they remain in school?

The following table compares the end-of-year reading achievement of poor and middle class elementary school children in grades one through six. At the research site the achievement of poor children begins to noticeably lag by the third grade; and by the sixth grade they are (on the average) a year and a half to two years behind their more affluent counterparts, although the disadvantaged pupils have been exposed to large doses of compensatory education.

TABLE S 1 COMPARISON OF READING ACHIVEMENT SCORES OF DISADVANTAGED AND MIDDLE CLASS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PUPILS - SPRING 1972



The Problem

In recent years thousands of research studies and experimental school projects have been undertaken in an attempt to identify and treat the causes of substandard academic performance by poor children. Among the causes frequently identified are the following: genetic, psycholinguistic, psychomotor, institutional racism, teacher training deficits, socioeconomic status, administrative leadership and poor self-concept.

The evaluation system as a direct, causative factor in educational failure has been little investigated. Thus, this study sought to analyze the impact of obtrusive evaluative research methods and procedures in the form of instruments potentially harmful to the subjects of educational evaluation.

We have labelled those procedures and instruments which produce reactive effects potentially damaging to children as iatrogenic.

The Iatrogenic Effect

Iatrogenic injury refers to a broad category of debility caused by the activities of physicians in the course of diagnosing and treating patients. Serious iatrogenic effects result from medical testing and diagnosis. Yearly, tens of thousands of patients die or suffer major impairments from X-rays, mylograms, and other tests.

It is the conclusion of this study that the major methodological approach of educational evaluation is potentially iatrogenic as presently utilized to assess the deficits and progress of Black and Chicano pupils enrolled in interventionist educational programs. Current modes of testing and diagnosing these disadvantaged students have iatrogenic outcomes. The tests are inimical to the self-image and motivation of Black and Chicano children, shattering their self-confidence, lowering teacher and parental opinion, reinforcing negative expectations; and possibly contributing as much to the child's overall socio-educational deprivation as any other known factor.

Similar to medical intervention wherein the patient is hurt far more than he is helped by the evaluation procedure, the minority, disadvantaged student may incur educational damage by being subjected to current standardized testing methods.

RESEARCH SITE

The research site was an inner-city California school district, among the ten largest in the state. The sample consisted of 100% of the fifth grades at the six poorest schools and three integrated schools in this district. The median AFDC (welfare) rate was 67.5%, that is, two-thirds of the children who attend these low-income schools come from families on welfare.

In addition to low SES, these poor schools are segregated black with a smaller proportion of Chicano and Caucasian pupils. As low SES schools these children all qualify for special federal assistance under ESEA, Title I. Approximately 51% of the teachers in the sample are Black.

EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

Hypothesis

If standardized achievement testing poses an iatrogenic threat to Black and Chicano children, then the effect of frequent testing would be that of depressing their achievement test scores. This outcome was hypothesized despite published studies which show test scores generally improve under serial retesting.[3]

Objective	To identify and quantify the extent and degree of iatrogenic reaction incurred by Black and Chicano inner-city school pupils administered standardized achievement tests.
Hypothesis	Unlike middle class pupils, who show better performance after serial retesting, Black and Chicano children will show depressed performance on standardized achievement tests (SATs) with frequent exposure to this category of evaluation.

Research Methodology

The overall research design consisted of four parts:

1. Structured classroom observations before, after and during group standardized testing.
2. Teacher checksheets on test perceptions and interviews.
3. Observations during diagnostic testing.
4. Interval analysis of test scores.

An analysis was made of gains and losses in measured achievement at four group test administrations, September, 1971; April, May and September, 1972. Comparisons were made of group administered and individually administered test results.

Additional variables studied included: pupil's age, sex, sibling position, school attendance, mobility, parental occupation, parental income, class size, teacher experience, school (AFDC) welfare ratio.

The basic research procedure, interval analysis, was first suggested by Erick Lindeman.[4] This technique reveals internal movements between test periods, movement which is usually masked by the use of mean or median scores. Pupil shift was analyzed in term of stanines. The stanine is a test norm. Stanines are nine bands or ranks

established to conveniently group pupils according to their performance on SATs. A pupil who scores at the 90th percentile occupies the 9th stanine. A pupil who scores at the 5th percentile is in the 1st or bottom stanine.

Comparing pupil gains or losses by detailing stanine shift allows a determination of direction of change across quartiles and readily indicates whether a net positive shift is real or illusory.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Variables

Data on a large number of variables were collected. Appendix A summarizes the data for these variables, including those presented below. Statistics on these variables are, of course, presented as averages.

Class size	23.98 children
Teacher's sex	1.92 (only 1 male)
Teachers' years experience	7.44 years
Pupil age	11.28 years
Annual pupil absence	10.35 days
Years pupil has attended present school	3.87 years
Number of schools pupil has attended	2.40 schools
Total children in pupil's family	4.24

Classroom Observations

Observations during standardized achievement testing determined that group achievement testing is a high-stress activity for a great percentage of low-income area children. Indications of this stress and tension ranged from deliberate distraction of other children to crying and running out of the examination room. Additional incidents illustrative of fear and stress included the following: boys playing tic-tac-tow under their table several minutes after test had begun;

boys noisily pushing carrels together despite teacher warning; children insisting they had stomachaches; pupils with "killing" toothaches; epidemics of bubble gum blowing, etc.

Signs of frustration, conflict and hostility were ubiquitous in all classrooms. A large percentage of children played it "cool," hurrying through the test; randomly guessing, then turning in their test and rushing out of the room. The average student was timed in 18 minutes for test batteries which, properly taken, require 38 minutes.

Some pupil comments were as follows:

> "This (test) don't mean nothing."
> "Mr. C (vice principal) won't find out my score, will he?"
> "Do our folks gotta find out our score?"
> "I guess I'm just a boxhead."
> "Why us? Why do we got to take this test?"
> "Will it go on our record?"
> "What happens if we flunk?"

Teachers frequently pointed out pupils who had the ability to do well but would not try on the test.

Teacher Observations

Teachers in the majority declaimed the SAT test as presently administered to Black and Chicano low-income children. They reported frequent incidents of upset children not only during the test administration but lasting several weeks after the test was given. As one experienced teacher stated:

> With all these tests, the children lose at least six weeks of instruction during the year. The week the test is given is lost and the class is upset for another good two weeks ... and this happens at least twice a year.

A reading teacher, highly trained in test administration, complained:

> It's the same, whether I test these kids in the ghetto schools or in the (integrated) hill schools. By the time they reach the 4th grade the test is an excruciating ordeal. Even on a one-to-one basis they refuse to take it. I wind up threatening to call their parents. Finally, they give up and race through the testing ... guessing.

A checklist was given to teachers, requesting they indicate how many pupils were upset during test administration in May and the typical pupil reaction to the test. Teachers responded that 43% of their pupils were visibly upset during the test.

These teachers further stated that frequently acting-out, upset pupils influenced others in the classroom, affecting their test scores.

Asked how many children reacted to the test by completely refusing to take it, giving up shortly, or guessing, teachers responded that 38% of the girls and 62% of the boys present either refused to take the test at all, guessed or gave up after a short time.

TABLE S2

5TH GRADE PUPIL RESPONSE TO READING ACHIEVEMENT TEST ADMINISTERED MAY, 1972

	Boys	Girls
Failed to take test	8%	5%
Worked short time, then gave up	15%	9%
Worked short time, then guessed	23%	14%
Guessed all the way through	16%	10%
	62%	38%

Interval Analysis of Test Scores

The fifth grade students in this study received three standardized achievement reading tests during the regular school year and an additional test in September of the following school year. Test A (CTBS) was administered in September 1971. Tests B (Stanford) and C (CTBS) were administered in April and May of 1972. As Table S3 indicates, the typical student in this research study dropped an average of two stanines between Tests B and C, administered 38 days apart. [5]

Interval analysis determined that only 24% of the students improved by one stanine or more between Tests B and C, while 75% showed no change or dropped one or more stanines below previous measured achievement level.

A total of 310 fifth grade students in Title I schools were administered the CTBS test in September 1971 at the beginning of the fifth grade. The group mean for measured achievement in reading was a grade equivalent of 4.1 (Bar A). (Table S4)

TABLE S3

STANINE SHIFT BETWEEN TWO ACHIEVEMENT TESTS
(April 1972 - May 1972)

	Stanine Drop		No Change		Stanine Improvement			
Stanine Shift	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5
Percentage of Pupils	5.6%	24.7%	45.5%	18.1%	5.2%	.3%	.3%	.3%

N = 310

Chi Sq. = 52.217
Significance is at .001 level
Dg. of Fr. = 20
STD (X) = .974

In April 1972 this group of students was tested with the Stanford Achievement Test. At this time the group mean for measured achievement in reading was 4.8. The group had shown seven months gain in measured achievement (Bar B). (Table S4)

One month later, in May 1972, the CTBS test was administered on a posttest basis; the form of the test identical to that used the previous fall. It would be hypothesized that the group average of this May testing would show substantial improvement for the following reasons:

1. This is the high growth season for measured achievement when the learning curve is logarithmic, advancing at a faster rate than during the fall and winter months.

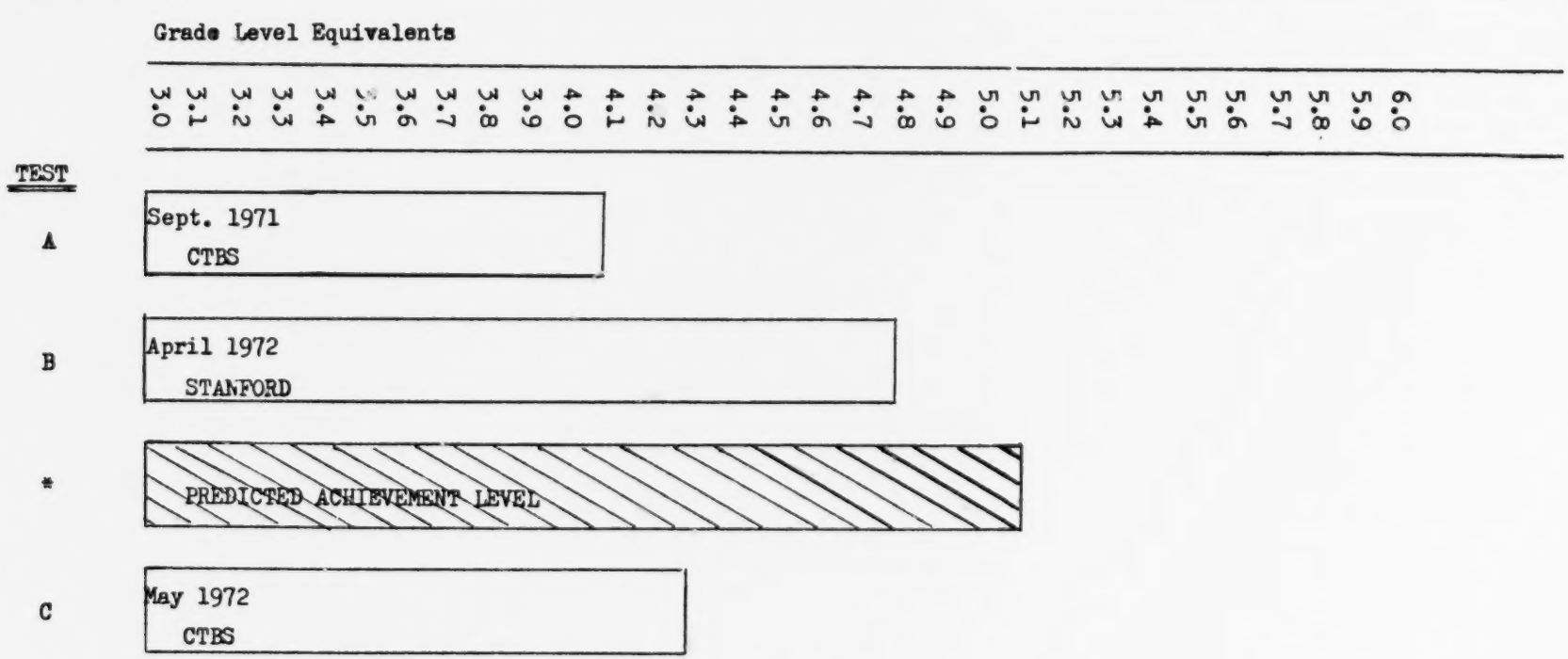
2. According to research, positive gains are generally anticipated when children receive serial re-testing.[6]

3. The CTBS test is generally perceived as easier than the Stanford and more appropriate for pupils from low-income families. According to an Educational Testing Service survey, the CTBS is, on the average, ten percentile points easier than the Stanford. In terms of grade equivalents the predicted achievement level of the students on the CTBS would be three months greater than evidenced as the Stanford,[7] as illustrated by the diagonal bar.

What in fact happened was that the students showed a group mean for measured achievement of 4.3 on the spring CTBS testing. This was five months below the average score on the Stanford (which is documented as a more difficult test) and 8 months below predicted achievement level (Bar C). (Table S4)

TABLE S-4

GRADE LEVEL EQUIVALENTS FOR THREE ACHIEVEMENT TESTS
FOR FIFTH GRADE STUDENTS



Stanine Shift and Other Variables

Analysis was conducted to determine the correlation of negative stanine shift (between Tests B and C) with several key variables. Variables included: mother's education, father's income, number of siblings, school racial integration, sex, and welfare status.

1. Mother's Education, generally associated with higher academic achievement across all racial and ethnic groups, was found to have little or no effect on achievement decline. Sixty percent of the pupils whose mothers had less than an eighth grade education either showed no growth or dropped one stanine or more after taking Test 3. Similarly, 60% of the pupils whose mothers had some college education showed no growth or suffered stanine decline.

TABLE S5

STANINE SHIFT AND MOTHER'S EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

Mother's Education	No. of Pupils	Stanine Decline	Stanine Gain +1 St.	+ 2 St.	+ 3 St.
0 - 7 years	60	60.0%	15.0%	15.0%	10.0%
8 years	38	42.9%	42.9%	14.3%	0.0%
9 -11 years	96	52.9%	34.3%	8.6%	4.3%
12 years	96	51.4%	40.0%	7.1%	1.4%
13-15 years	20	60.0%	13.3%	13.3%	13.3%

N = 310

2. Father's Income also had little or no effect on decline in measured achievement following frequent testing. 22.4% of the pupils whose father's income is in the income range $0 - 4800 dropped one stanine or more, 26.0% for the income range $4800 - 7000, 37.7% for the income range $7000 - 9500, and 34.7% for the income range $9500 - 12000. Conversely, 23.5% of the pupils whose father's income is in the income range $0 - 4800 gained one stanine or more, 29.9% for the income range $4800 - 7000, 15.6% for the income range $7000 - 9500, and 21.7% for the income range $9500 - 12000.

3. Family Size was found to be directly correlated with significant decline in measured achievement following frequent group testing. Growth in measured achievement

was more frequently sustained in the case of fifth graders who had one sibling. Students with two or more siblings typically incurred a decline of two stanines. Fifth graders who were only children suffered a high degree of stanine decline.

As the table below, S6, indicates, children from two-sibling families performed the best, with only 24% falling in the lowest three stanines. Single children fared badly, with 45% of this group falling within the bottom three stanines. When family size reached seven children, 63% had achievement test scores which placed them in one of the bottom three stanines.

TABLE S6

FAMILY SIZE AND STANINE DISTRIBUTION AFTER SPRING TESTING 1972

Number of Children	Stanines 1-2-3	Stanines 4-5-6	Stanines 7-8-9	Total
1	45.2%	40.4%	14.4%	100%
2	23.8%	51.0%	25.2%	100%
3	38.3%	59.1%	15.8%	100%
4	42.5%	50.5%	7.0%	100%
5	42.2%	46.8%	11.0%	100%
6	36.2%	41.4%	5.2%	100%
7	62.9%	33.4%	3.7%	100%
8	50.1%	45.3%	4.6%	100%
9	60.0%	40.0%	0.0%	100%

4. Racial Integration was found to have little or no effect on decline in measured achievement following frequent testing. A total of 61 Black fifth grade students attending previously white segregated schools were subjected to the same evaluation system as the larger experimental group. The smaller group was poor and lived in the same segregated residential area as the larger group. As was the case with children attending segregated schools, 70% of the fifth graders attending integrated schools dropped one or more stanines below previous measured achievement in the space of 38 days.

5. Other variables, including sex and welfare status, were found to have no effect on decline in measured achievement. Girls sustained roughly the same percentage decline as did boys; and students from non-welfare families incurred as much downward stanine decline as did students from welfare families.

Thus, father's income, mother's educational level, femaleness and non-welfare status, factors generally highly correlated with higher achievement, failed to act as brakes to drastic decline in measured achievement following frequent group testing.

Posttest Iatrogenic Effect

Instances of reactive effect in the weeks immediately following administration of Test C included: declarations by teachers that their class was still upset and "skyhigh" as a result of the test; complaints that valuable learning time had been lost due to the continual imposition of standardized tests; and communications indicating their rapport with students had been seriously impaired because of the testing. One such communication, written by an experienced male teacher, is illustrative:

> Much of the energies that go into building self confidence and self image in the child are shattered when, after taking the battery of tests, the child has reinforced his belief that ... "I am dumb." The teacher too drives a wedge between himself and the child since there is no way he can B.S. his way around the test.
>
> How difficult it is to restore your credibility to the child after he's gone through the frustrations of the test.
>
> I administered two sittings of parts 6 and 7 -- Concepts and Applications -- of the CTBS test. It was disgusting. I could give you a running account of the internalized and overt frustrations, but I know you are already too familiar with them.

Summer Interval Analysis, May - September, 1972

A further attempt was made to quantitatively identify the direction and range of stanine shift five months after the May posttest in order to detect whether measured iatrogenic effect had been sustained. The severity of the drop in measured achievement between May (Test C) and September (Test D) is indicated by Table S7 for the five low-income area schools. At the time of the September test the entire fifth grade study group had been promoted to the sixth grade.

TABLE S7

ACHIEVEMENT LOSS MAY - SEPTEMBER 1972

School	5th Grade Test (C) May 1972 Grade Equivalent	6th Grade Test (D) Sept. 1972 Grade Equivalent	Net Loss
Port	4.1	4.1	4 months
North	3.8	3.9	3 months
South	4.4	4.1	7 months
East	4.4	4.5	3 months
Star	3.8	3.4	8 months

At the time of the sixth grade test (D) the average for each school was the hypothetical grade level equivalent of 6.1. All of the classes in the research study were substantially below the mean at May testing; but their decline accelerated during the summer months in the interval between Tests C and D.

Through interval analysis it was determined that although disadvantaged children incur a loss during the regular year (by failing to show sufficient gain relative to the national norm as illustrated in Table S1), the study group suffered a far greater loss in the months following May testing.

The study group pupils (typically) fell twice as fast in achievement during the summer months (following May posttesting) as they were able to rise during the regular school year. During the regular school year, between September (Test A) and April (Test B) standardized testing, the typical pupil gained .73%ile points per month. But during the ensuing summer he incurred a drop of 1.57%ile points per month, as determined by Fall testing (Test D).

Thus, the typical intermediate grade pupil in this study falls twice as fast in the five month interval between Test C (Spring) and Test D (Fall) as he is able to rise during the regular school year.(TESTS C and D are CTBS Q, II READING)

THE EVALUATION SYSTEM

The evaluation system commonly utilized to assess the impact of compensatory education programs consists of a series of standardized test batteries which serve to classify low-income area children along

a grade level-achievement continuum. By the time of the May test the students in this study had been subjected to six major group tests within an eight-month period, including three reading tests and three math tests. By contrast,the fifth graders in the affluent area schools of the same district were administered only two tests during this period.

Nationally, this lopsided ratio obtains, with Black and Chicano children invariably subjected to very frequent testing as compared with advantaged children.

Other than the labeling and classifying of children and the creation of havoc in the classroom, does this proliferation of testing serve a socially useful function? Are standardized achievement tests of value in assessing program value, pupil progress or instructional expertise? According to Professor H. Bamman, these tests have no credibility as far as measuring reading skills.

> The act of reading is not merely "word calling," but is composed of intangible skills. Standardized achievement tests in their present form do not, cannot measure reading.[8]

Further, utilizing standardized achievement tests as the core of an evaluation system poses problems for the following reasons:

1. The problem of obtaining standardized tests which contain a clear, consistent definition of the things being assessed. Procedures currently in use for constructing tests are a mess and no one knows what the achievement test measures, according to Anderson.[9]

2. The incidental relationship between test items and curricular content. The standardized achievement test rarely measures instructional input, and as such, is of little value for informing the teacher what the child mastered during the school year.

3. Standardized achievement tests (SATs) are normed so that half the population (sampled) are ranked above the 50th percentile and the other half below the median. Thus, by definition, one-half the children taking an SAT must score in the lower two quartiles. A class of instant losers is automatically established once the psychometric definition of satisfactory achievement is accepted. In order for the normal curve (so necessary to norming procedures) to obtain then, SAT items are constructed to determine not so much what a child knows as what he doesn't know. SAT items are selected mainly for their capacity to discriminate between high and low scores on the total test.

4. For any single SAT test score there is a 25% probability that the score is either too high or too low. Repeated retesting can produce either test wiseness or increase pupil frustration.

5. Procedures used to construct and establish norms for SATs exclude the focused, specific questions needed to judge performance of a particular pupil for the purpose of diagnosing and monitoring progress as well as items which would allow evaluation of special instructional or organizational procedures.

6. SATs usually contain items which are biased against the disadvantaged child from a culturally different milieu. These items are unrelated to either curriculum or everyday experience[10] (see Appendix B).

Normed diagnostic tests administered by trained specialists elicit more accurate and detailed information on the child's reading strengths and deficits.

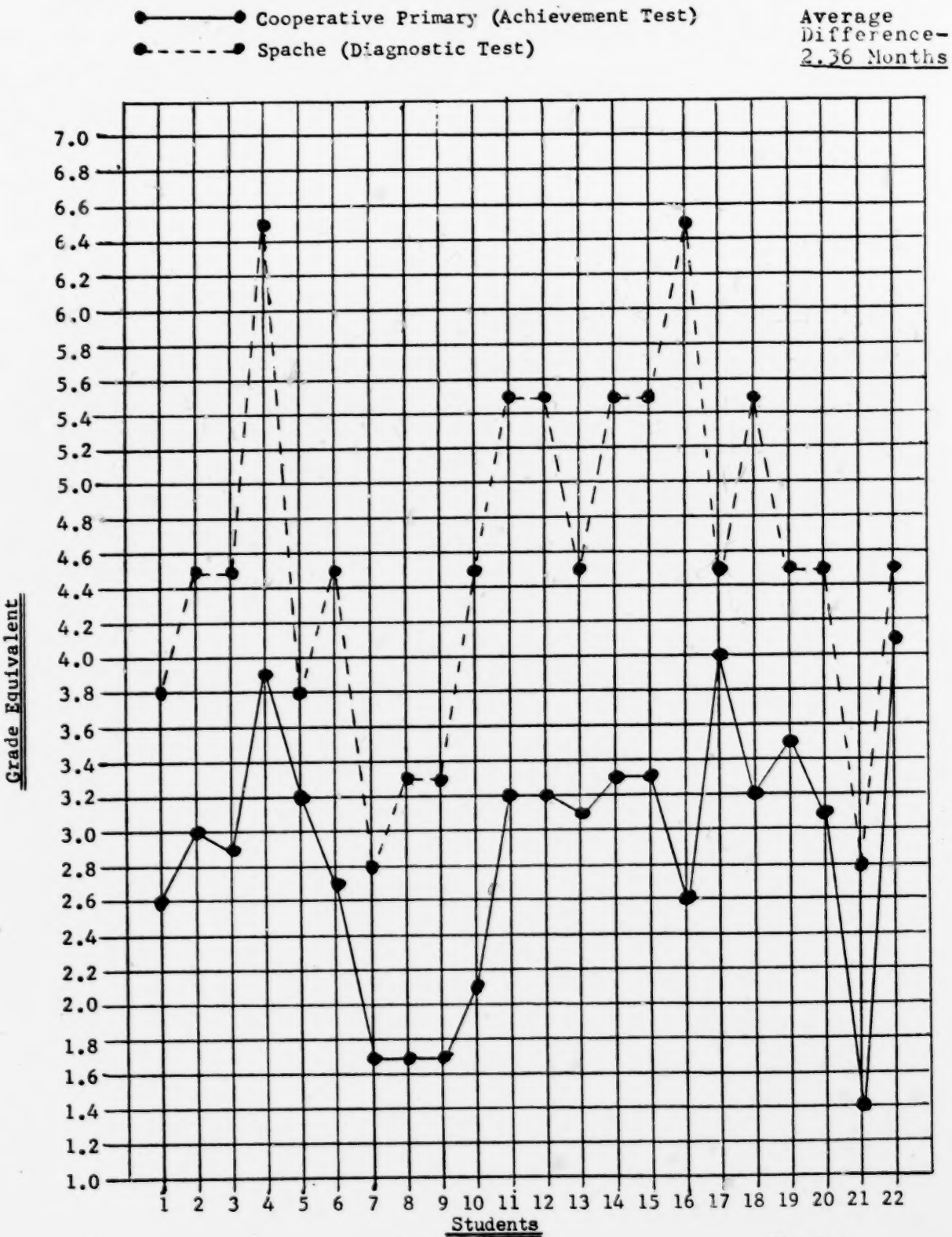
As Tables S8 and S9 show, intermediate grade children in low-income area schools perform far better on diagnostic tests than on SATs. On spring end-of-year testing these children performed from 5 months to 2 years, 4 month better on an average than they did on SATs. Importantly, these third, fourth and fifth grade children who were administered diagnostic tests were deemed to be most in need educationally. Thus, they received the services of remediation specialists who subsequently administered diagnostic tests on a 1:1 basis.

The testing procedure as well as the instrument appears to be a major determinant of test scores.[11] Observations indicated the specialists were trained in test administration, knew how to create a positive test-taking climate and were alert to the child's psychological needs, including his fear of the test.

TABLE S8
COMPARISON OF DIAGNOSTIC AND STANDARDIZED ACHIEVEMENT TEST RESULTS FOR INTERMEDIATE GRADE DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN SPRING 1972

School	Grade	Diagnostic Test Score (G.E.)	Standardized Achvt. Test Score (G.E.)	Difference	N
Port	4th	4.4	2.7	1.7	18
North	"	4.1	3.7	.5	22
South	"	4.9	3.7	1.2	26
Star	"	4.0	2.5	1.5	31
Port	5th	4.3	2.7	1.5	19
South	"	4.6	3.5	2.1	30
Star	"	3.5	2.8	.7	16
					N = 162

TABLE S9 COMPARISON OF DIAGNOSTIC AND STANDARDIZED TEST RESULTS FOR 3RD GRADE DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN (SPRING, 1972)



SUMMATION

The effects of a mass, standardized testing program on the measured achievement of 371 Black and Chicano fifth grade students was qualitatively and quantitatively evaluated over a twelve-month period. Analysis determined that:

1. Children who previously had demonstrated significant gains in reading achievement on the basis of individually administered diagnostic tests and a group administered achievement test typically showed a decline of two stanines on the final standardized test of the school year.

2. None of the factors traditionally associated with higher achievement, such as father's income, family income or mother's education, stemmed the general decline in achievement following frequent testing.

3. This general decline in measured achievement continued, eventuating in a greater decline in achievement as measured by a post-summer achievement test administered in September.

4. Standardized group testing as presently conducted is a stressful experience for Black and Chicano students. Approximately three-fifths of the boys and two-fifths of the girls displayed grief, anger, withdrawal, or some form of dysfunctional anxiety as evidenced by rapid guessing, physical complaints, etc.

5. Fear, loss of self-confidence and the dread of blame and ridicule at failing the test was apparent in the statements of children and teachers interviewed.

6. Impairment was not confined to test-taking ability but appeared to damage the capacity of the child to function cognitively for weeks following test administration.

7. It appears that the effect associated with impairment of achievement is cumulative and enduring. Further study, extending beyond the sixth grade, is necessary to fully confirm the extent of irreversible damage to affect and cognitive ability.

RELATED RESEARCH AND THEORETICAL ANALYSIS

Writing on measurement as a change agent, Eugene J. Webb and associates have compiled a landmark study on the negative effects of obtrusive measurement. Webb states:

> With all the respondent candor possible, and with complete role representativeness, there can still be an important

> class of reactive effects - those in which the initial measurement activity introduces real changes in what is being measured.[12]

There are many explanations which might plausibly relate negative reactive effects to testing, ranging from the psychological and physiological to the macrosociological. In the psychological realm, Farley and Mealiea found that single children are more likely to have extreme fears than other children.[13] The prevalence of great fear and anxiety in such children could explain the steep achievement decline noted in children in this study who came from one-child families. Amongst children initially more fearful than others it could be expected that the iatrogenic effect would be more pronounced.

Anxiety connected with test taking has shown to increase with grade level and may induce physiological as well as behavioral problems as the child progresses through the intermediate grades.[14] Intense competition, classroom tension, pressure and dread of censure and ridicule can foster a chronic anxiety which adversely affects every part of the organism, not excluding the eyes and mental functions associated with seeing.[15]

At the macrosociological level tests can be perceived as clever instruments for gaining acquiesence to the early selection of an elite and ejection of the "masses" from competition. The control and utilization of evaluation by dominant status groups can be inferred from in the propositions of several social scientists. Friedenberg claims that test data are needed

> to justify decisions for which no data were needed at all in order to make a show that the educational process is fair, impartial and plays by the rules.[16]

Turner states that system control is maintained by

> training the "masses" to regard themselves as relatively incompetent ... by cultivating belief in the superior competence of the elite. The earlier that selection of the elite recruits is made the sonner others can be taught to accept their inferiority and to make "realistic" rather than phantasy plans. Early selection prevents raising the hopes of large numbers of people.....[17]

Primary and Secondary Reaction

Conceptualizing at this stage may prove fruitful by analyzing reactive effects of evaluation according to their primary or secondary character. Primary reactive effects refer to changes which initially impede learning and are of temporary duration.

Secondary reactive effects refer to subsequent changes of a more permanent nature which reinforce the primary reaction, sustaining a major decline in learning.

The Primary Reactive Effect

The avoidance of failure becomes almost instinctive in a society which incessantly evaluates individuals for the purpose of withholding rewards from one segment and allocating lifelong benefits to another.

Research studies implicitly underscore the fact that obtrusive evaluation automatically invokes an anxious, defensive posture in threatened subjects who have reason to fear being judged incompetent. For these subjects alternate sources of positive evaluation are unavailable.

An upper class student is secure in his crucial early years in that he obtains praise or support from other areas, or he can fall back on the "genetic success" conferred by his parents.

The role of anxiety in the primary reactive effect can be deduced from a review by Kirkwood.[18]

> There is a positive correlation between level of anxiety and level of aspiration. Those who are least anxious when facing a test tend to be those who have the least need or desire to do well on it.
>
> Extreme degrees of anxiety are likely to interfere with test performance.
>
> A high level of anxiety tends to be positively correlated with the following: Negroes, rural children, children with emotional problems, unpopularity with peers, low socioeconomic level.
>
> Poorer students tend to be most anxious when facing a test.

Writing about anxiety, Rollo May states,

> What has been lost is the capacity to experience and have faith in one's self as a worthy and unique human being, and the capacity for faith in, and meaningful communication with others ....[19]

And, further explicating the stressful reaction to the excruciating ordeal the group standardized test has become for Black and Chicano elementary children, Fromm-Reichmann states that

> .... when anxiety is so severe that all these expressions of it and all defenses against it fail to bring relief,

> panic or terror may be the outcome ... the direction of all available energy is toward only one goal - escape.[20]

In an early study Osler determined that if children perceive themselves as failures, then they will function as failures. His experimental pupils, who were informed they were in the top 10% after an initial pretest, significantly outperformed a matched group who were similarly informed they were in the bottom 10%. (The children were lied to).[21]

Katz claimed significantly elevated test results for ghetto pupils obtained by creating a relaxed, conducive testing atmosphere. Katz devised a series of experiments which determined the effect on IQ performance of being black in a white dominated society. His youthful black subjects achieved at a significantly higher level when they were deceived into believing that their intelligence was not being tested.[22] Katz concluded that his examinees were aware of the judgment of black intellectual inferiority held by the typical white American. Realizing the motivation of these pupils was low as well as their test scores, Katz devised an unobtrusive measuring device; the test was disguised as something else, and the human ambition to do well soared.

Sale's research determined that those students who take a personal responsibility and accept the blame for poor performance were especially threatened ... "since they feel their failure reflects their basic incompetence."[23]

It would appear that negative judgments by evaluators are but a more recent and systematic rendition of constant judgment by classroom teachers. As Jackson writes,

> Adaptation to school life requires the student to become used to living under the constant condition of having his words and deeds evaluated by others.[24]

Students today must live with the continual tension of possible failure. Thus, Finn speculates that "the significant amount of psychological withdrawal observed by Jackson is a function of failure expectations on the part of many elementary school pupils."[25]

The Secondary Reactive Effect

The disadvantaged child, already burdened by a depressed sense of confidence, is terribly threatened with additional failure by repeated standardized achievement testing. By year's end, these children have been exposed to a veritable barrage of testing. To the extent that evaluation imposes a battery of ego-deflating, anxiety provoking instruments, it is damaging to the very student it is supposed to help. According to Adelman, the child's expectations of his future achievement will reflect these initial achievement experiences.[26]

Secondary reactive effects refer to the enduring manifestations of successive threat and failure, wherein the child comes to internalize an aversion toward his "focused defect" as documented by the test instrument. Prolonged, obtrusive evaluation which is judgmental and derisive may obliterate the capacity to risk. The institutionalization of this

> tendency to judge and control the student's behavior becomes incompatible with the atmosphere of trust, which is essential to the process of inquiry.[27]

Labov's important research links this climate of fear and mistrust to the cognitive process as he analyzes the source of defensive, monosyllabic behavior of ghetto youths.

> The child is in an asymmetrical situation where anything he says can, literally, be held against him. He has learned a number of devices to avoid saying anything in this situation and he works very hard to achieve this end.[28]

Stigmatized persons must live with the knowledge that their ability to perform adequately is in constant jeopardy because of real or imagined shortcomings. For the stigmatized Black and Chicano child, taking tests can be dangerous. He is vulnerable. The test can "confirm" his societal as well as his academic inferiority.

The fearful, over-evaluated child learns to employ various devices

> as a means of defense, attack or adjustment to the overt and covert problems created by the consequent societal reaction to him. (Thus) his deviation is secondary.[29]

The stigmatized child not only learns that he is deviant, an inferior specimen; but after successive testing also understands and comes to respect these standards which judge him. The system of social control becomes fully operative as he comes to learn why he is inferior.

> He will see that he does not look or talk the way he should, that he is not "educated," that he has a low IQ, that he is not a "success" and that he has very little in the way of "achievements."[30]

Each time the stigmatized, disadvantaged pupil is subjected to iatrogenic evaluation in the form of standardized testing, his inferiority is confirmed and his deviance reinforced as he comes to believe in the intrinsic mental superiority of those social or racial groups who hold power.

CONCLUSION

The major educational problem of our time is that of overcoming the substandard academic performance of vast numbers of disadvantaged,

low-income children. Evaluations of intervention programs designed to improve reading and math achievement find that despite of these programs, the longer these children remain in school the "dumber" they appear to become. This investigation suggests that evaluation methodology per se and obtrusive evaluation in the form of standardized tests form an important link in the educational failure syndrome.

This study evidenced that the dominant methodology of educational research is iatrogenic in that it is destructive to disadvantaged minority children in the intermediate grades. The study found:

1. That Black and Chicano elementary children know more and are learning more than standardized tests show.

2. That neither teachers nor students profit from the administration of such tests.

3. That testing is a high stress activity for many Black and Chicano children, subjecting them to extreme anxiety and frequently unbearable tension.

4. That instrumentation can be an important cause of regression in the measured achievement of Black and Chicano children. In this study, testing accounted for a drop of two stanines in the reading achievement of the typical student.

5. That these tests fail to inform educators how to help children, but are useful in stamping Black and Chicano children as chronically inadequate. The tests serve as confirming devices, reflecting the popular ideology. Derived scores "prove" that affluent area children are smart; and poor, minority children are stupid.

Two categories of iatrogenic effect are conceptualized as determinative of the pernicious results of testing on the cognitive, affective and societal capacity of stigmatized children. These are termed primary and secondary reactive effects. Those reactive effects identified as primary in nature serve to lower measured achievement significantly below real achievement and ability level. Secondary reactive effects refer to the permanent impact on the child's cognitive potential, building on initial fear, anxiety and low self-confidence; and then irreparably damaging the child's educational future.

Future expectations on the part of teacher and child may be permanently depressed as the child's academic as well as his race or ethnic inferiority is "confirmed."

The ultimate societal effect of iatrogenic procedures is that of effectively reducing the child's life chances. Through the application of harsh, prejudgmental and obtrusive methods, evaluation may covertly lend itself to a socio-educational deception.

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APPENDIX A

VARIABLE	X BAR	SD
Class Size	23.976	5.826
Teachers Sex	1.923	.266
Teachers Years Experience	7.440	5.074
Students Sex	1.480	.500
Students Age	11.278	4.452
Student Times Absent	10.348	10.839
Students Years Present School	3.869	2.194
Students Number Schools Attended	2.405	1.623
Fathers Years Education	11.260	3.301
Mothers Years Education	11.269	2.573
Total Children In Family	4.240	2.088
Students Age Rank Among Siblings	3.010	1.942
Stanford April 72 Percentile	37.456	27.682
Younger Siblings	.943	1.020
Stanford April 71 Percentile	38.822	27.749
CTBS October 71 Percentile	22.982	19.174
CTBS May 72 Percentile	26.139	20.795
Summer Shift	-.459	1.329

APPENDIX B

In the spring of 1970 a group of elementary school teachers in a large, inner-city school district revolted against standardized testing. These teachers refused to administer the mandated tests, but after being threatened with disciplinary action and possible loss of their credentials, withdrew from their position.

These teachers, at a predominantly Mexican-American school, then refused to turn in the test results, claiming they were "biased and unfair to culturally disadvantaged children." There was a swell of support for the rebelling teachers from colleagues throughout the district.

Following are excerpts from The Montclarion newspaper, Oakland, California, and a sample of the standardized test items these teachers objected to. (It should be noted that the fifth graders in this study were once subjected to this test).

The
Montclarion
June 3,1970

Joan Cohn, a teacher at Golden Gate elementary, said the tests are "very damaging to the youngsters" and indicated there are children in her classroom who are reading far better than their test scores show.

Her own way of handling this is to have talks with parents to assure them their children are doing well in spite of test scores.

Mrs. Cohn attempted to read from the controversial reading test to illustrate culturally biased questions.

But Supt. Benbow cautioned Mrs. Cohn about reading from the test, saying they are "confidential."

Board President Ann Corneille then announced she had quoted from the test on a television program taped that very day.

Director Lorenzo Hoopes said: "There's no use compounding the error."

Outraged groans from members of the audience prompted Benbow to explain: "These tests are supposed to have a certain amount of confidentiality to them."

A parent shouted: "If I can't hear it I don't want my child to take it."

Director Mel Caughell said: "I don't think this is the arena to thrash this out."

Benbow said: "We have the same concerns as you do. We'll be tickled to death to join in expressing concern."

Director Barney Hilburn said he shared the opinion of Lazear teachers. "I think this test is biased. The I.Q. test has been dropped for that reason some places and I'm utterly opposed to these tests."

Mrs. Cohn marked the questions she felt are biased and passed the test around to the school board directors who reviewed them during the rest of the meeting.

In a parting comment, Mrs. Cohn suggested "Sensible thoughtful adults should take the attitude – we're stuck with this, why not take a lighter attitude toward the results of the tests."

Francisco Aviles, resident of the Lazear school community, addressed the board in Spanish to demonstrate the difficulty Spanish speaking children have when confronted with the English language.

"Did you understand me?" he asked. Mrs. Corneille smiled and said: "I hope you aren't going to give us a quiz on this test."

George Stokes, executive secretary of the Oakland Federation of Teachers, told of a community meeting the night before of Lazear parents and residents, who came on "in solid support of what the teachers are doing."

"Teachers gave the tests and when they saw the reaction of the children during administration of the tests, they turned on to what they should do."

Stokes said the administration has been frank and honest in discussions with the OFT which is "mediating" the dispute.

"They want you to give them total support by protecting them with a resolution and to help put the pressure on those who force them to administer tests which are not helpful."

He asked the board to send the resolution to the state board, the state department of education and legislators.

Edgar Case, executive director of the Oakland Education association, announced support of OEA. He said there should be a strong indication on the part of the board and the administration that "no action will be taken against the teachers and there will be support of their right to protest the tests."

Jane Smallens, teacher a Garfield school, presented petitions signed by teachers from eight schools and her own, in support of the Lazear teachers. They were Webster, Stonehurst, Cole, Clawson, Prescott, Durant, Emerson, all elementary schools, and Lowell junior high school.

Others to join in support of the Lazear teachers were Elijah Turner of the Black Caucus and Cezar Mendez of the Lezear community.

Victor Ban Bourg, attorney for the OFT, told the board he has advised teachers not to comply with the order to turn in test scores becuase there is a "greater risk" of unprofessional conduct by turning the scores in than in refusing to do so because they are "virtually destructive" to the children.

"We have many laws and not everyone or most everyone complies with all of them. Just because a statute is written doesn't mean it's legal. So we must not all feel we must comply soldier-like."

Director Barney Hilburn said he doubted from what he had seen of the tests that even "white middle class children" could do well.

The
Montclarion
Dec. 2,1970

Open letter

Parents of sixth graders at Lazear elementary school

After a thorough study of the CTBS Achievement tests and the Lorge - Thorndike Intelligence Tests, we find it would be a breach of our professional ethics to administer these tests to our classes. We have come to this conclusion based upon the following concerns:

1. Because these tests expect unrealistic experience levels, children have not had an equal opportunity to do well on these tests. Especially those children whose native language is not English, in our case, Spanish - speaking.

2. Because of the first concern, the frustration point of these tests is such that it forces the children to do random guessing and is extremely damaging to the child's self - image.

3. These tests do not test the material presented in our state textbooks, especially in language and mathematics.

4. These tests penalize the slow, perfectionist student who would score much higher if given more time. Working carefully is not an indication of low achievement as the test score implies.

5. These tests do not identify reading problems and do not indicate the level at which a child is performing. We find them of no educational value.

6. These tests minimize teacher evaluation on a child's cumulative record.

7. This kind of testing fosters the wrong kind of learning. Being able to choose a correct answer is not, in our opinion, a goal for which we should be striving. Tests should evaluate creative ability and judgment and maturity used in problem solving situations for a true indication of achievement and intelligence.

8. We disapprove of labeling children with test scores. I.Q. is not as closely related to success in life as is perseverance.

9. The method of administering the test is invalid because it allows individual teachers to use their own judgment about "helping" a child to interpret the directions on the test. The test manual does not make this clear. Test administration cannot be standardized in this way.

10. This type of testing is unfair as it allows a child only one chance. For instance, one child who transferred during the year was given the CTBS test twice and the following resulted:

CTBS - R2, Oct. 1969
Vocabulary – 5.2
Comprehension – 3.8
Total – 4.5
CTBS - Q2, Jan. 1970
Vocabulary – 3.9
Comprehension – 2.7
Total – 3.4

What about the child who only took it once? Does one test allow for a temporary emotional upheaval in the family? Does testing one time allow for possible sickness on that day?

11. Textbook orders are based on test scores and the most desirable books are often unavailable to us.

We hope you take every opportunity to examine and discuss the standardized tests now being used. Teachers need parents' support now if any changes are to take place.

We cannot stand alone!

LOIS WERNER
Sixth grade teacher, Lazear school
ANN REES
Sixth grade teacher, Lazear school
CHUCK YOUNG
Fifth/sixth grade teacher, Lazear school

Can you pass this 2nd grade test?

With all the fuss recently abour reading tests which are required by the state of California, we thought our readers might enjoy seeing some of the tests for themselves.

Teachers at Lazear school in Oakland don't think much of the tests and neither do many other teachers, administrators and members of the board of education.

Here's one goody from Educational Testing service which is administered to 1st grade pupils:

Read this

There once were three little turtles named Charles. They all played together in the same pond. When their mothers called them to supper, they didn't know which turtle was being called.

46 The three little turtles had the same . . . | mother. | name. | supper.

47 Why didn't they know which turtle was being called? | They wanted to play and not go to supper. | They were all named Charles. | They all looked alike.

Read this

One night each little turtle told his mother that he didn't want to be called Charles any more. Each little turtle wanted to be called Charlie.

But the little turtles did not tell each other.

That night when their mothers called them to supper, things were as bad as they had been before.

48 Which did the turtles change? | Their names | Their looks | Where they played

Read this

Molly is a big dog. She lives on a farm. Goats live on the farm. One goat has three baby goats. Molly helps the goat take care of the babies. Molly is a good goat sitter.

31 Who is Molly? | A baby | A dog | A goat

32 Molly lives in . . . | a city. | a small town. | the country.

33 Molly must be . . . | kind. | bad. | young.

34 The best name for the story is . . . | On the Farm. | Goat Sitter. | A Big Dog.